

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Sarah White, and I am a resident of Hartford. I am also a member of CT DSA and involved in the accompaniment network of Hartford Deportation Defense.

I strongly support HB 6616: An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status", which would expand HUSKY coverage up to age 26 and is an important step towards ensuring everyone in Connecticut has access to healthcare, regardless of their immigration status.

I have been involved in the immigrant rights movement for many years and have also worked with immigrant families who are unable to access healthcare in my role as an attorney at non-profits. One of my co-organizers lacked access to prenatal health coverage due to her family's immigration status. She was facing an emergency due to her pregnancy and spiraling costs, and tried to access emergency healthcare. Her need to access emergency healthcare and her lack of insurance ultimately contributed to her partner's unjust detention and deportation. This deeply affected me and strengthened my commitment to immigrant-led organizing to combat the cascading injustices of our immigration system, which affect nearly every aspect of people's lives.

All of us need access to healthcare, including mental health and dental care, and we all know that without insurance, healthcare is prohibitively expensive. I have seen immigrant families go without doctor's visits because they can't access health insurance and can't pay out of pocket. I have seen immigrant children go without therapy and mental health treatment because our state, the richest in the country, denies coverage to most children and adults who are undocumented.

Last year, Connecticut expanded access to HUSKY to children up to age 12. But all kids and all residents need access to healthcare, and we need a plan to expand access to HUSKY for all ages, regardless of immigration status. We cannot leave undocumented families behind, especially as we recover from the pandemic and the ongoing effects of COVID-19, including on our mental health. Children need healthcare, but so do their parents, something that's been proven to increase the likelihood that children are also insured and receive regular medical care.

I strongly support HB 6616 and urge you to pass the expansion of HUSKY to kids up to 26 this year as we work towards ensuring immigrants of all ages have health insurance.

Sincerely,

Sarah White
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